I have no hesitation in finding that the chairs, etc. are goods within the meaning of that definition since they are clearly not passengers' luggage.

The respondent's argument is that the Regulations must be read as a whole to discover what is being controlled. The Regulations as a whole include the short title which in this case is "The Motor Vehicles Commercial Use Regulations". From the terms of the short title it would appear that the legislature is controlling motor vehicles when used commercially and not motor vehicles when used privately. The authority for reading the short title as an aid to the construction of the written law as a whole can be found in *Maxwell* on Interpretation of Statutes, 9th Edition, pages 44 — 45.

If the Regulations were not confined to commercial user there would arise the absurd consequences referred to *obiter* by Buhagiar J. in *Khoo Teck Yam v. Public Prosecutor*[1] that the person who takes home a pot of flowers in his private motor vehicle commits an offence. Since it is possible to adopt a construction to avoid this absurdity that construction (incidentally in this case favourable to the subject) should be adopted.

I am satisfied that the intention of these Regulations is to control the use of motor vehicles when used commercially. In this case the motor vehicle was not used commercially and for that reason I agree with the learned Magistrate that no offence was disclosed by the prosecution since the chairs and tables were being carried for the private purposes of the Association. For these reasons the appeal is dismissed.

There is also a further reason for dismissing the appeal. The charge relates to an offence on the 14th September, 1956. At the trial evidence was given that the respondent was the owner of the motor vehicle on the 14th September, 1956, but all the evidence concerning the commission of the offence related to the 14th December, 1956. There was no evidence on the record supplied that on the day of the offence the respondent was in any way connected with the vehicle and for this reason also the appeal is dismissed.

Appeal dismissed.

Re DAVID GREIG IRONSIDE

[O. C. J. (Whyatt C.J.) April 2, 1958]

[Singapore — Admission of Advocates & Solicitors No. 2 of 1958.]

Advocates and Solicitors — Admission — Notice of application — Posting of, at Registrar's office — Shortening of period — Petition for admission by member of Federation Bar to Singapore Bar — Whether 7 years practice in Federation a special ground — Advocates and Solicitors Ordinance (Cap. 188), s. 5(5).

The petitioner, a member of the Federation Bar, asked the Court to exercise its powers under section 5(5) of the Advocates and Solicitors Ordinance to reduce the period of posting of the notice of his application for admission to the Singapore Bar from 6 months to 2 months, and relied on two special grounds: (i) that he had been engaged in the Federation in the active practice of his profession after having qualified as an advocate and solicitor of the Federation of Malaya, and (ii) that he had been so engaged for seven years.

Held: (1) the first ground is a ground expressly provided for in the subsection;

(2) there is nothing special or exceptional about being an advocate and solicitor of seven years standing. this fact cannot constitute a special ground for the purpose of subsection (5) of section 5 of the Ordinance.

Petition dismissed.

Case referred to:—

(1) *In re Shawcross,* (1956) M.L.J. 104.

ADMISSION OF ADVOCATES & SOLICITORS.

J. D. Donnelly for the petitioner.

K. Gould for the Bar Committee.

Miss Rennie Chew (Crown Counsel) for the Attorney-General.

Whyatt C.J. : — This is a petition by David Greig Ironside for admission to the Singapore Bar. The petitioner is at present a member of the Federation Bar and fulfills all the necessary statutory requirements for admission to the Singapore Bar except one : the notice of his application for admission has not been posted at the Registrar's Office for the statutory period of six months. The petitioner therefore asks the Court to exercise its powers under sub-section (5) of section 5 of the Advocates and Solicitors Ordinance to reduce the period of notice from six months to two months, citing as the special grounds for doing so, that he has practised as a member of the Federation Bar since the 21st February 1951.

Counsel for the Bar Committee opposed the application to reduce the period, contending that the fact that the petitioner had practised in the Federation for the past seven years was not in itself a special ground within the meaning of sub-section (5) of the Ordinance. In the course of his argument counsel for the Bar Committee informed the Court that prior to 1953 it was necessary for every person wishing to be admitted to the Singapore Bar, not only to give six months' notice of his petition but also to receive instruction in law for six months in an advocate and solicitor's office in Singapore unless the Court ordered, on special grounds, that the period should be reduced or dispensed with, but that in that year an amendment was made to the Advocates and Solicitors Ordinance exempting a member of the Federation Bar from the requirement

of receiving instruction in law for six months in Singapore. The provision as to the six months' notice remained unaltered and counsel for the Bar Committee informed the Court that since 1953 there have been nine cases where members of the Federation Bar have been admitted to the Singapore Bar, in eight of which the petitioners have given the requisite six months' notice; the one exception was a case where the petitioner had previously practised his profession in Singapore, not, it is true, as a private practitioner, but as a member of the Colonial Legal Service, and his application for the period of notice to be reduced had not been opposed by the Bar Committee. Similarly, in the case of members of the Singapore Bar seeking admission to the Bar of the Federation (where the statutory requirements are identical), the petitioners had invariably given six months' notice although there had been one case where a petition having lapsed and a new one having been filed in its place, the period of notice was reduced, but as the total period of notice in respect of the two petitions was far in excess of six months, this case did not appear to be a true exception.

As against these cases referred to by counsel for the Bar Committee, counsel for the petitioner relied upon three older cases decided prior to 1953. In one of them, decided shortly after the war, the period for receiving instruction in law in Singapore was dispensed with and the period of notice was reduced to allow admission forthwith, and in the other cases the period for receiving instruction in law and the period of notice were substantially reduced without any special grounds being advanced other than long standing at the Federation Bar.

The review of these cases appears to show, as counsel for the Bar Committee contended, that at all events since 1953, when the law was amended, the general practice has been for members of the Federation Bar and members of the Singapore Bar, when seeking admission to the Bar of the neighbouring jurisdiction, to allow the full statutory period of six months to elapse before applying to the Court for permission to practise. But although this may have been the practice in recent years, it is not decisive of the present application since each case, as was said in *In re Shawcross*[1] must depend upon its own particular facts. The question I have to decide therefore in this case is whether the fact that the petitioner has been in active practice in the Federation since 1951 constitutes special grounds entitling the Court to reduce the statutory period of notice, and if it does, to what extent I should reduce the statutory period.

In the course of his submissions on behalf of the Bar Committee, counsel laid emphasis on the fact that although the legislature had in 1953 abolished the requirement of receiving six months' instruction in law in Singapore in the case of members of the Federation Bar, it had retained the requirement as to notice and moreover had left the statutory period of six months unaltered. Whether it was reasonable to do so, is not, of course, a matter which concerns this Court, and I refer to it because there may be a tendency to approach the issue raised in this case by an inquiry as to whether it is reasonable that an advocate and solicitor who has had long and continuous practice in the Federation and who is sufficiently familiar with the laws of Singapore to be able to practise here without receiving any further instruction in them should have to wait as long as six months before being admitted to the Singapore Bar. But the Ordinance does not give the Court power to reduce the period because it considers it reasonable to do so in the circumstances of a particular case. On the contrary, the question posed by sub-section (5) of section 5 is not whether it is reasonable to reduce the statutory period of six months but whether there are special grounds for doing so. The petitioner relies on two special grounds in this case, first, that he has been engaged in the Federation in the active practice of his profession after having qualified as an advocate and solicitor of the Federation of Malaya, and second, that he has been so engaged for seven years. The first ground calls for no comment as it is a ground expressly provided for in the sub-section. But, as regards the second ground, what is special about having practised at the Federation Bar for seven years? A great many members of the Federation Bar, perhaps the majority of them, have been in active practice for as long as that; so far from it being a special feature, it is quite a common attribute of the practitioners at the Federation Bar to be advocates of seven years standing. Indeed if the word "special" were used to describe every advocate possessing such a qualification, it would, in my opinion, be a misuse of the word since it would be used to describe that which is, in fact, quite ordinary and usual. It follows, therefore, that as there is nothing special or exceptional about being an advocate and solicitor of seven years standing, this fact cannot constitute a special ground for the purpose of sub-section (5) of section 5. The petitioner, having failed to establish the two special grounds which he relies on in this case, his petition to reduce the statutory period is dismissed.

Petition dismissed.